

News Release

Human Rights Activist and Olympic Gold Medalist Tommie Smith to speak at UMC

By Marcia Walker, Elizabeth Tollefson on Tuesday, January 16, 2007

CROOKSTON, Minn. (January 16, 2007) – Civil rights activist and former Olympic gold medalist Tommie Smith, will speak at the University of Minnesota Crookston (UMC) on Thursday, Jan. 25, 2007, at 4 p.m. Smith's presentation entitled, "The Power of A Dream," focuses on the quality of one's mind the integrity of one's soul and the determination of one's will in deciding the future and shaping lives. The presentation takes place in Kiehle Auditorium with a reception in the Kiehle Rotunda immediately following.

During his career, Smith set seven individual world records and was a member of several world record relay teams while a student athlete at San Jose State. During the 19th Olympiad held in Mexico City in the summer of 1968, Tommie Smith broke the world and Olympic records to become the 200-meter Olympic champion. As Smith and teammate and bronze medalist John Carlos stood on the victory podium, each raised a clinched fist, covered with a black leather glove in a black power salute signifying solidarity and racial consciousness. This courageous, unexpected worldwide event propelled Smith into the spotlight as a human rights spokesman, activist and symbol of African American pride at home and abroad. Cheered by some, jeered by others and ignored by many more, Smith made a commitment to dedicate his life, even at great personal risk, to champion the cause of oppressed people.

Smith's talent, along with his unwavering devotion to human rights, would eventually earn him well-deserved acclaim along with both athletic and humanitarian awards. Since the games of the 19th Olympiad, he has enjoyed a distinguished career as a coach, educator, athletic director and activist.

Smith received his bachelor's degree from San Jose State University in social science, with double minors in military science and physical education. He received his master's in sociology from Goddard Cambridge in Boston, Mass. In 2005, Smith received an honorary doctorate of humane letters from San Jose State University.

To learn more about Smith's presentation or about other events recognizing Black History Month at UMC, contact Marcia Walker, diversity coordinator, at 218-281-8583 (walke161@umn.edu).

The University of Minnesota Crookston (UMC) delivers more than 24 different undergraduate degree programs, including online options, in agriculture; arts, humanities and social sciences; business; math, science and technology; and natural resources. UMC is dedicated to helping students and the region aim higher, reach further and dream big dreams. To learn more, visit www.UMCrookston.edu.

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